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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 002791

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/18/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KNNP](#) [KAWC](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: FM QIRBI DISCUSSES IRAN, SALEH VISIT, CT ISSUES
WITH AMBASSADOR

REF: A. SANAA 2767

[B](#). HQ MACDILL AFB FL 161738Z

[C](#). STATE 92662

[D](#). STATE 105271

[E](#). SANAA 2699

Classified By: Ambassador Thomas C. Krajewski for reasons 1.4 b and d.

[1](#). (S) Summary: In a September 18 meeting with Ambassador, Foreign Minister Abubakr Qirbi discussed potential IAEA action against Iran and Saleh's November visit to Washington. Discussions also focused on several counter-terrorism issues, including support for the extradition of an Iraqi former regime member, GTMO detainees and possible Ramadan amnesty releases. End Summary.

Iran/IAEA: "Nothing Against the Resolution, but..."

[2](#). (C) Ambassador stressed that Iran must cease uranium enrichment activities and begin cooperating fully with the IAEA Board of Governors. He urged Yemen to vote to refer Iran to the Security Council for discussion and potential action. Yemen reportedly intends to vote against such a resolution, Ambassador added, and urged the ROYG to reconsider its position and vote alongside the members who are committed to holding Iran to its NPT obligations.

[3](#). (C) Qirbi would neither confirm nor deny ROYG's position on the Iran vote, but replied "we have nothing against the resolution," but are consulting with the Arab League on a separate resolution. "Yemen is committed to a nuclear free Middle East," Qirbi said, adding that any resolution against Iran should demand Israel abandon their nuclear program as well. Ambassador replied that Iran's clear violation of its NPT obligations is the issue, not a possible Israeli nuclear program. The USG supports a nuclear free Middle East as well, Ambassador stressed, and referring Iran to the Security Council would help achieve that goal.

Saleh's Visit

[4](#). (C) Ambassador informed Qirbi that specific topics for Saleh's November meeting with Bush would soon be finalized. Focus would be on security cooperation, economic development, and democracy building. Ambassador hoped to soon receive an official presentation of ROYG views on these issues, as promised by Saleh. From the USG perspective, continued Ambassador, expect concerns over press freedoms as well, including the recent detention of several journalists by government authorities (septel). He also mentioned the disturbing news of the abduction and beating of one journalist (ref A), with possible assistance from security authorities, for alleged ties with the US Ambassador.

[5](#). (C) Qirbi provided no additional information on ROYG views for the November visit. He did present, however, a draft "Memorandum of Intention" establishing a framework for future US-Yemen cooperation. Qirbi explained that the memorandum outlined broad guidelines for cooperation on counter-terrorism, military issues, and economic assistance. Ambassador promised to share a copy with Washington and report back. A broad outline for cooperation provides a good starting point for strengthening our bi-lateral relationship, said Ambassador, but preparations for Saleh's visit must focus on specific steps to improve US-Yemeni cooperation.

CT: Extradition of Iraqi, Security Detainees, and Zindani

[6](#). (S) Moving on to CT issues, Ambassador informed Qirbi that the Iraqi government issued an arrest warrant for Umar Sabawi, Saddam Hussein's nephew and insurgency leader, and would soon approach ROYG with an extradition request (ref B). "Are you sure he's still here?" replied Qirbi. Sabawi is in Yemen, replied Ambassador, stressing that USG will fully support Iraq's request and suggested ROYG immediately freeze his assets and detain Sabawi for extradition. Ambassador said he would seek approval for releasable intelligence for MFA on Sabawi's activities to facilitate his extradition.

17. (C) On GTMO detainees, Ambassador expressed concern for the delay response on the pending transfer of six former enemy combatants (ref C and D) and urged the ROYG to accept the return of its own citizens. He requested an official answer, either affirmative or negative, in writing.

18. (C) On security detainees in Yemen, Ambassador anticipated ROYG would once again release prisoners during a Ramadan amnesty (ref E). Early communication and transparency before release, stressed Ambassador, would avoid last minute tension over terrorism related detainees, especially in advance of Saleh's post-Ramadan visit.

19. (C) Qirbi provided no substantive response to Sabawi's extradition or GTMO detainees, but did provide Ambassador with a written request for detailed intelligence on Abdul Majeed Zindani's financial support to terrorist groups. Ambassador accepted the letter, but replied that nevertheless, Zindani's inclusion on the UN terrorist financing list required ROYG to freeze his assets and prosecute any illegal financial activities.

110. (C) Comment: ROYG is hesitant to move against Zindani given the Sheikh's relative popularity and his role during the 1994 Yemeni Civil War of rallying "Arab Afghanis" to fight alongside northern forces. Zindani recently gave a public interview requesting President Saleh to "take up his case" on the terrorist financing designation, which apparently he has. End Comment.
Krajeski